



THE INTERNATIONAL VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT (IVAWA) (S.2120)

U.S. Senators should cosponsor the International Violence Against Women Act (IVAWA) (S.2120).

Every year, violence devastates the lives of millions of women and girls worldwide. Freedom from violence is a human right; yet, one out of every three women worldwide will be physically, sexually or otherwise abused during her lifetime—with rates reaching 70 percent in some countries. Violence against women and girls is a global epidemic and a human rights violation occurring daily, ranging from harmful practices such as rape, “honor killings”, female genital cutting, and human trafficking. Violence against women destabilizes countries, impedes economic progress, and prevents women from contributing to their community.

IVAWA makes ending violence against women and girls a top U.S. diplomatic and foreign assistance priority. The bill creates a more effective and efficient strategy to combat gender-based violence (GBV) by streamlining the US government’s current efforts. Amnesty International USA, Futures Without Violence, CARE USA, and Vital Voices Global Partnership developed the legislation, with input from more than 40 international and 150 U.S. based groups with relevant expertise.

Specifically, IVAWA would:

- Establish a clear Global Strategy on how to combat violence and calls for collaboration with other agencies, governments, and organizations
- Make the Office of Global Women’s Issues a permanent fixture in the State Department, with the purpose of directing the US’s foreign policy approach in relation to gender
- Develop Country Plans which will be comprehensive, individualized accounts that explain what violence women face and how that violence will be addressed in each country
- Regularly report to and brief Congress on violence against women and the US’s efforts to prevent it

Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Robert Menendez (D-NJ), and Susan Collins (R-ME) reintroduced the bipartisan IVAWA in the Senate, but the bill needs more support if it is to succeed. Violence against women is a human rights violation and public health pandemic, the US must make ending GBV a global priority.

AIUSA Recommendations to Congress:

- U.S. Senators should cosponsor IVAWA (S.2120)